

Copy of a letter addressed by the RT. HON. THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, Chairman of the Imperial Federation League, to its Members throughout the Empire:—

Imperial Federation League.

43, ST. MARGARET'S OFFICES,
VICTORIA STREET, S.W.

October 15th, 1886.

SIR,

The movement towards a Federation of the Empire has lately received an impulse and reached a stage which deserve serious attention and renewed efforts on the part of the League.

It will be within your recollection that a Deputation of our body, including representatives from all parts of the Empire, waited upon the Prime Minister in August last, and urged him "to call a Conference, or to appoint a Royal Commission, "to be composed of accredited representatives of the United Kingdom and of each of "the self-governing Colonies, for the purpose of suggesting some practical means "whereby concerted action may be taken:—

- " (1) for placing upon a satisfactory basis the defence of the Ports and "the Commerce of the Empire in time of war;
- " (2) for promoting direct intercourse, Commercial, Postal, and Telegraphic, "between the several countries of the Empire in time of peace—and "any other means for securing the closer Federation or union of all "parts of the Empire."

Lord Salisbury stated in reply that it would be difficult to overrate the importance of the Deputation, and of the cause which it had in hand. He further promised that the statement laid before him should be carefully considered by the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister has since taken steps in fulfilment of his pledge. In the Queen's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament there occurs this significant paragraph:—

" I have observed with much satisfaction the interest which, in an increasing "degree, is evinced by the people of this country in the welfare of their Colonial and "Indian fellow-subjects, and I am led to the conviction that there is on all sides a "growing desire to draw closer, in every practicable way, the bonds which unite the "various portions of the Empire. I have authorised communications to be entered "into with the principal Colonial Governments, with a view to the fuller consideration "of matters of common interest."

This weighty announcement constitutes an epoch in the history of our movement, to which it is the duty of the Executive Committee to draw the special

attention of the League. Our policy has now for the first time been officially recognised by the Government of this country, which has publicly adopted the suggestions urged upon it last August.

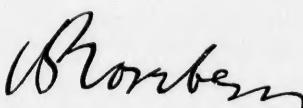
We venture, therefore, to express an earnest hope that members of the League will use every effort to obtain from the Government, the Legislature, and the Press in their various Colonies, careful consideration, and hearty co-operation, for the proposals which are to be made by the Imperial Government in accordance with the announcement in the Queen's Speech.

We would moreover point out how completely the action taken by the Imperial Government is in accordance with the principles of the League, which has refused to commit itself to any particular scheme of Federation, and has preferred to rely upon the initiative and good-will of the Colonies themselves, as expressed through their responsible Representatives.

No definite scheme has ever been advocated by the League, and none is adopted in the Queen's Speech. But the preliminary step which must necessarily precede all action is now to be taken, and the various parts of the Empire are invited to discuss freely and fully matters of common interest with the Imperial Government.

What these matters are it will be for the Representatives of the various Governments to decide. But with a view to guiding your own judgment in the matter I venture to commend to your attention the list of suggestions appearing in No. 9 of our Journal, a reprint of which accompanies this letter. You will find in it a reference to many points of common interest in which unity of administration and practical organisation could not fail to be of great service to the Empire.

It is not for us to lay down the particular methods in which Branches or individual members of the League can best forward the cause of Federation at the present juncture. We ask you, however, to further in every way the carrying out of the promise of the Queen's Speech, and shall be glad if you will forward to the Secretary of the League all information as to the progress you may make, so that workers throughout the Empire may be kept informed of the progress of the other Branches.



CHAIRMAN OF THE "IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE."
On behalf of the Executive Committee.

